

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 ACDA-12 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00
/118 W

-----105029 161956Z /15

R 161833Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9484
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 11162

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, OVIP, GW, SY
SUBJECT: FRG-SYRIAN RELATIONS: KHADDAM VISIT TO BONN

BEGIN SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH THE TALKS WERE CONSIDERED BY
BOTH SIDES TO BE USEFUL, NOTHING OF FUNDAMENTAL
IMPORTANCE CAME OUT OF THE VISIT OF SYRIAN PRIME MINISTER
KHADDAM'S VISIT TO BONN. KHADDAM REMAINS PESSIMISTIC
ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE. THE SADAT
INITIATIVE, IN HIS VIEW, HAS FAILED; HOWEVER, SYRIA DOES NOT
WANT TO LOSE EGYPT AND SADAT CAN HEAL THE BREAK BY
ADMITTING FAILURE. END SUMMARY.

L. FRG FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS TELL US NOTHING NEW
CAME OUT OF SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO
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THE FRG (JUNE 6-8). NEVERTHELESS, THEY CONSIDER THE
FACT THAT KHADDAM WAS INTERESTED IN EXCHANGING VIEWS
WITH THE FRG AS INDICATIVE OF SYRIA'S DESIRE TO KEEP
COMMUNICATION LINES OPEN WITH THE WEST. KHADDAM'S
VISIT IS VIEWED FROM HERE AS HAVING AN IMPACT ON SYRIAN
DOMESTIC POLITICS AS WELL SINCE EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY
GIVEN TO IT IN SYRIA SERVED TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE

SYRIAN PUBLIC SYRIA'S NON-ALIGNED POSITION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SYRIA TO THE WEST.

2. DURING HIS THREE DAY VISIT, KHADDAM EXCHANGED VIEWS WITH FRG PRESIDENT SCHELI, CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER AND OTHERS. WE ARE TOLD THAT THOSE TALKS WERE UNIFORMLY CORDIAL AND CANDID. THE GERMANS WERE IMPRESSED AT THE WAY KHADDAM SEEMED DELIBERATELY TO BE TRYING TO KEEP THE TALKS ON A VERY FRIENDLY AND AGREEABLE BASIS.

3. AS EXPECTED, KHADDAM STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE SADAT INITIATIVE. HE SAID IT HAD FAILED AND WOULD HAVE NO LASTING EFFECT ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. IN THEIR PRIVATE TALKS WITH HIM, BOTH SCHMIDT AND GENSCHER DISAGREED, NOTING THAT THE FRG DID NOT SHARE HIS OPINION. IN THEIR VIEW, THE SADAT INITIATIVE HAD HAD A SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT ON WESTERN OPINION AND THAT THIS, EVEN IF IT WERE THE ONLY EFFECT, HAD DEFINITE AND POSITIVE MEANING FOR THE MIDDLE EAST. KHADDAM COUNTERED BY CLAIMING THAT THE WEST WAS OVERREACTING IN THIS REGARD AND THAT BY THE TIME OF THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS IN THE US, THE WESTERN JEWISH LOBBY WILL HAVE REASSERTED ITSELF.

4. ALTHOUGH HE BLAMES SADAT FOR THE BREAK IN DIPLOMATIC
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RELATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA, KHADDAM CLAIMED THAT SYRIA DID NOT WANT TO LET IT LEAD TO THE LOSS OF EGYPT FROM THE ARAB CAMP. HE DID NOT SPECIFICALLY DEMAND SADAT'S RESIGNATION. KHADDAM SAID THAT SYRIA ONLY WANTED TO REMIND SADAT OF HIS PLEDGE TO RESIGN IF HIS INITIATIVE FAILED. HOWEVER, SADAT'S ULTIMATE POLITICAL FUTURE WAS UP TO THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE. IN A CONVERSATION WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT KHADDAM ELABORATED ON THIS POINT BY AFFIRMING THAT SYRIA WAS READY TO REESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH EGYPT IF SADAT PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE FAILURE OF HIS INITIATIVE. (COMMENT: THE FOREIGN OFFICE VIEWS THIS AS A NOTEWORTHY BUT MINOR SHIFT FROM THE PREVIOUSLY STATED SYRIAN POSITION. END COMMENT.)

5. OVERALL, KHADDAM WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IN HIS VIEW THE ONLY SOLUTION WOULD COME AFTER THE WEST PUT HEAVY PRESSURE ON ISRAEL FOR COMPROMISE. IN THIS REGARD, HE SAID THAT THE EC MUST SPEAK OUT MORE CLEARLY. (GENSCHER ANSWERED THIS BY NOTING THAT THE FRG HOLDS FIRMLY TO THE EC'S STATEMENTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST ON JUNE 1977 AND APRIL 1978.)

6. GENSCHER TOLD KHADDAM OF HIS PLANS TO VISIT
ISRAEL AT THE END OF JUNE (SEE SEPTTEL). WE ARE TOLD
THAT KHADDAM ACCEPTED THIS AMICABLY AND OFFERED NO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 11162

CRITICISM OF CONTINUING GERMAN CONTACTS WITH ISRAEL.
NEITHER DID HE CRITICIZE GERMAN AID TO ISRAEL OR, AS
HE HAS DONE IN THE PAST, COMPARE GERMAN AID COMMITMENTS
TO ISRAEL WITH THOSE TO SYRIA. DURING DISCUSSION OF
HIS UPCOMING TRIP, GENSCHER ASKED RHETORICALLY WHAT
KHADDAM WOULD ASK ISRAEL TO DO IN THE INTERESTS OF
PEACE. KHADDAM NOTED TWO CONDITIONS. FIRST, ISRAEL
MUST INDICATE THAT IT IS COMMITTED TO PEACE BY MAKING
A STATEMENT THAT IT WOULD ADHERE TO UN RESOLUTIONS ON
THE MIDDLE EAST. SECOND, ISRAEL MUST PUBLICLY ACCEPT
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN
PROBLEM TO THE OVERALL SETTLEMENT.

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7. ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST WAS KHADDAM'S PRIMARY FOCUS, DISCUSSIONS DID COVER OTHER POLITICAL TOPICS:

-- LEBANON: KHADDAM'S COMMENTS ON LEBANON WERE CONSIDERED QUITE TOUGH BY THE GERMANS. KHADDAM SAID THAT SYRIA WAS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO THE SUPPORT OF THE LAWFUL LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. ANY PARTY TRYING TO INTERFERE WOULD HAVE TO FACE SYRIAN TROOPS.

-- PLO: THERE WAS NO SYRIAN PRESSURE ON THE FRG ON THE SUBJECT OF THE PLO. KHADDAM'S ATTITUDE WAS QUITE RELAXED, AND AT ONE POINT HE NOTED THAT "WE HAVE OUR TROUBLES TOO WITH THE PLO."

-- RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION: THE FOREIGN OFFICE TELLS US THAT UNDERLYING MANY OF KHADDAM'S COMMENTS WAS THE SENSE THAT SYRIA, MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, CONSIDERED THE SOVIET UNION AS A FRIEND NOT TO BE TRUSTED. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT WAS OBSERVED THAT KHADDAM'S COMMENTS THAT SYRIA WAS COMMITTED TO KEEPING THE MIDDLE EAST OUT OF THE GREAT POWER CONFLICT WERE AIMED MUCH MORE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SOVIET UNION THAN AT THE US. (OUR FOREIGN OFFICE CONTACTS NOTE THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN BONN WAS MOST INTERESTED IN THE KHADDAM VISIT, HAVING REQUESTED BOTH PRE- AND POST-VISIT BRIEFINGS.)

-- AFRICA: KHADDAM SAID THAT ZAIRE WAS LOST AND THAT MOBUTU WOULD FALL NO MATTER WHAT THE WEST TRIED TO DO. MOBUTU WAS CORRUPT AND HE HAD NEITHER THE ABILITY NOR THE WILL TO LEAD ZAIRE OUT OF ITS DIFFICULTIES.

-- SSOD (IRAQI RESOLUTION): THE GERMANS ASKED KHADDAM
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IF HE SAW ANY CHANCE THAT IRAQ WOULD WITHDRAW ITS DRAFT RESOLUTION. KHADDAM FIRMLY DECLINED TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY, NOTING THAT "THE SSOD WILL NOT GO ANYWHERE ANYWAY, SO WHY NOT USE ALL AVAILABLE PUBLICITY TO PUT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL."

-- AFGANISTAN: KHADDAM MENTIONED CONFIDENTIALLY THAT THE UPPER LEVELS OF THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT WERE DEPPLY

CONCERNED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGANISTAN. HOWEVER, THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF INJECTING THEMSELVES INTO THE SITUATION IN ANY WAY.

8. DURING HIS VISIT, TO BONN, KHADDAM BROKE AWAY FOR SEVERAL HOURS TO TRAVEL TO COLOGNE TO MEET WITH THE BDI (BUNDESVEREAND DER DEUTSCHEN INDUSTRIE E.V.), THE ASSOCIATION OF GERMAN INDUSTRIALISTS. HIS MESSAGE TO THEM WAS THAT SYRIA ACTIVELY SOUGHT GERMAN INVESTMENT AND HE DISAVOWED ANY SYRIAN NATIONALIZATION PLANS. THERE IS A BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON THE PROTECTION OF INVESTMENT WHICH ENTERED INTO FORCE IN AUGUST 1977, BUT OUR FOREIGN OFFICE CONTACTS DISCOUNTED THE POSSIBILITY THAT GERMAN INVESTMENT TO SYRIA WILL INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

9. KHADDAM ALSO SIGNED A BILATERAL AID AGREEMENT FOR GERMAN CAPITAL AID TO SYRIA OF DM 100 MILLION. THIS IS A ONE YEAR ALLOCATION CONSISTING OF A CAPITAL AID LOAN (INTEREST AT 2 PERCENT) FOR PROJECTS WHICH WILL BE DESIGNATED AS THE YEAR PROGRESSES. THIS AMOUNT IS BASICALLY THE SAME AS THAT COMMITTED DURING THE PAST YEAR, SOME OF WHICH HAS YET TO BE UTILIZED.

10. ACCORDING TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE, KHADDAM GAVE PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO DOING THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE UPCOMING VISIT OF SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD, NOW SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 11-15.

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Message Attributes

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